

My name is Anita MonCrief and I've been referred to as "the ACORN whistleblower."

I attended the University of Alabama and began my advocacy and human rights efforts with the American Bar Association. I traveled to Canada to promote understanding of the United Nations System and volunteered in several countries. In 2002, I served as an election observer with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on its mission to Macedonia to maintain stability during a crucial presidential election.

In 2005, I turned down a promotion to move to Maryland with a company that has offices worldwide. Instead, I accepted an offer from ACORN's Nathan Henderson-James to move to DC to work in ACORN's national office. Though the cost of living was higher and the pay lower, I felt ideologically connected to ACORN's mission. I joined the staff of ACORN affiliate Project Vote's development department. I worked for both ACORN and Project Vote. I worked with grassroots organizers across the country to fund one of the largest voter registration drives in United States history.

After leaving ACORN in January 2008, I worked with the Grameen Foundation and the labor-affiliated American Rights at Work.

While at ACORN/Project Vote, I worked in the Strategic Writing and Research Department (SWORD) within ACORN's Political Operations (POLOPS). As part of the SWORD staff my title was Writer/Researcher. My salary was paid by Project Vote, with which I held the title of Development Associate, but I had an ACORN email address.

During my time with ACORN I served in various capacities within the POLOPS family. A summary of my main duties can be broken into two categories, ACORN Political Operations and Project Vote:

### **ACORN Political Operations**

- Provided assistance and sample boilerplate proposals to local political offices to use in local fundraising efforts (most of these assignments supported voter participation programs and the election administration work of various members of the COUNCIL of organizations).
- Worked with state Head Organizers in such states as Maryland, Ohio and Colorado to devise and implement a state political plan that could be used to demonstrate to funders, partner organizations and other political professionals that state's 2006 electoral plan.
- Researched the Maryland citizens of voting age to produce an estimated number of unregistered Latinos and African Americans.
- In 2005, 2006 and 2007, was primarily responsible for creating the Political Operations YEYB presentation presented every year at an internal meeting of ACORN staff members and focused on political participation.
- Created various PowerPoints for other COUNCIL organizations including Community Voting Together and a presentation for ACORN's Precinct Action Leader (PAL) program.

### **Project Vote**

- Worked with the ACORN National fundraising staff out of Brooklyn, New York, and was responsible for the migration of all donor database functions to a database called DonorPerfect.
- Served as the DonorPerfect system administrator for Project Vote and provided administrative support, training, and tracking for Project Vote's grant-based fundraising for a myriad of

purportedly 501(c)(3)-compliant voter participation efforts.

- Utilized DonorPerfect and the accounting system Navision and reconciled all data in DonorPerfect with existing Citizens Consulting Inc. and Project Vote data (this reconciliation involved accounting for almost \$9,000,000 of unaccounted funds given to Project Vote since 2004).
- Provided ongoing administrative support to all fundraising activities including: financial document-marshaling support for the 501(c)(3) fundraising program (boiler-plates, Project Vote budget, c3 voter registration budget creation, gathering of audits and financial reports from CCI, etc.), understanding funders and maintaining funding relationships.
- Assisted Project Vote with a fifty-state survey examining how states implemented HAVA's provisional voting requirement and conducted survey interviews with election officials across the country.
- Created materials and assisted in providing training to ACORN state political directors on 501(c)(4) fundraising so that they could solicit funds locally for voter registration programs.
- Maintained and updated the Project Vote Election website.

While employed with ACORN/Project Vote, I noticed ACORN's practice of poorly training employees and sometimes covertly encouraging people to skirt the rules during voter registration programs. After working on voter fraud research for ACORN political, I saw a pattern of employees being prosecuted for shenanigans during election years. I decided to take action and contacted the Employment Policies Institute (EPI). EPI ran a site called Rotten ACORN. I spoke to a Bret Jacobson about my concerns regarding ACORN management and how they treated their employees. Instead of trying to use me for information, Mr. Jacobson took into account my personal situation as a new mother of a preemie and suggested that I call back after securing other employment.

I was eventually terminated from Project Vote in January of 2008. I never hated ACORN as a result of my termination. In fact, I kept attending rallies and fighting the fight, until the true nature of one of ACORN's shake-down efforts, a campaign against the Carlyle Group (detailed below), was exposed to me. At that time, I told the head organizer that I would no longer get involved or be seen at events. I knew what they were doing and it really scared me. I realized the true nature of ACORN and this time I decided to fight against ACORN to really help poor people who were being used by ACORN.

In July of 2008, I contacted New York Times reporter Stephanie Strom after reading her article, "Funds Misappropriated at 2 Nonprofit Groups" (July 9, 2008). I provided information and documents about the inner workings of ACORN and Project Vote to Strom and passed information from ACORN board member Marcel Reid to Strom. Articles produced by Strom during this time include:

- "Head of Foundation Bailed Out Nonprofit Group After Its Funds Were Embezzled" (August 16, 2008)
- "Lawsuit Adds to Turmoil for Community Group" (September 9, 2008)
- "On Obama, ACORN and Voter Registration" (October 10, 2008)
- "ACORN Working on Deal to Sever Ties with Founder" (October 15, 2008)
- "ACORN Report Raises Issues of Legality" (October 21, 2008)

In the late summer of 2007, I reported to Strom that the Obama Presidential Campaign had sent its entire second quarter 2007 donor list to Project Vote Development Director, Karyn Gillette. Gillette

instructed me to work from the list to identify maxed out Obama donors and to separate the lists by states for fundraising for Project Vote's voter registration drive and Get Out the Vote efforts run by ACORN.

On October 21, 2009, Strom was set to come to Washington to meet me and to receive from me proof of contact between ACORN and staff of the Obama campaign. By this time, I no longer trusted her as I had earlier and would only give the proof to her in person. I had provided Strom with the list of donors from the Obama and Clinton second quarter donor list as well a DNC, DSCC and Kerry donor lists prior to her scheduled visit. That day, Strom reported to me via a voice mail that her editors at the New York Times told her to "stand down." In a subsequent telephone conversation that day Strom told me that it was not the policy of the New York Times to print a story that close to the election that could be considered a "game changer" for either side.

### **Testimony in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

That same day, October 21, 2008, I spoke to Marcel Reid and she provided information about a case in Pennsylvania and a telephone number for attorney Heather Heidelbaugh. Later that day I spoke to Ms. Heidelbaugh and told her that I had worked for ACORN/Project Vote in their Washington, DC office for a few years and had heard about her lawsuit. I informed her that I had information about ACORN and agreed to testify voluntarily at an upcoming hearing in the case. Heidelbaugh came to Washington, DC the next day and we spent several hours talking about my time in the ACORN DC office. I informed her about the circumstances of my termination from Project Vote and of my whistleblower work with the New York Times.

On October 29, 2008, I testified for more than two hours in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at a hearing on a request for a preliminary injunction before the Commonwealth Court. The Complaint against the Secretary of State and ACORN alleged violations of the Pennsylvania Election code, Fraud and Misrepresentation and Violation of Equal Protection and Due Process.

A memo prepared by Heidelbaugh in March of 2009 and submitted to a House Judiciary subcommittee outlines some of the relevant aspects of my testimony (which is available in full online).

My testimony covered the following significant facts:

- November 2007 – Project Vote contacted by Obama presidential campaign
- Project Vote received Obama donor list from Obama campaign
- Project Vote solicited Obama donors to pay for voter registration and to "get out the vote"
- Project Vote received donor lists from other Democratic and labor union sources: John Kerry campaign, [Hillary] Clinton campaign, Barack Obama campaign, Democratic National Committee, America Coming Together ("ACT")
- Project Vote development plan was to "approach maxed out presidential donors" and allegedly use the funds raised for voter registration drives
- ACORN "employees" were paid through Project Vote for partisan campaign activities, such as telling voters **"don't vote for Albert Wynn (sic) or vote for this person"**
- In reality, there was no division between the staff of ACORN and Project Vote and persons working for one entity performed work for either or both organizations
- ACORN chose the states in which Project Vote would conduct voter registration drives, based on political considerations

- Registration drives (by Project Vote) conducted in "battleground states" where "by coming in and registering new voters, it could change the outcome of the election"
- The Obama campaign's donor list was part of the evidence admitted into the hearing on the injunction in October 2008
- ACORN Political is the 'strategic planning arm' of ACORN, and it looks at contested congressional districts, ballot measures, initiatives like minimum wage, etc.
- Project Vote had a \$28,000,000 budget which was funneled through Citizens Consulting Incorporated ("CCI")
- CCI is an ACORN affiliated entity that receives and disburses all funds, including charitable contributions from the Rockefeller Fund, the Vanguard Charitable Endowment and other private foundations and donors, to over 175 affiliated ACORN entities
- In 2007, there was a \$9,000,000 discrepancy in the ACORN affiliated accounts

My testimony also shed light on a little known program within ACORN called "Muscle for the Money" and Heidelbaugh also summarized the lengthy court transcript to highlight this program:

ACORN has official and unofficial programs called "Muscle for the Money"

ACORN's Official "Muscle for the Money" Program:

- The "official" program is the name for the ACORN voter registration drives.
- The Obama campaign paid ACORN affiliate Citizens Services International ("CSI") almost \$900,000 for voter registration, voter identification, turnout and get-out-the-vote services.
- Obama campaign reported to the FEC that the expenditure was for "sound and lighting equipment," which does not exist.
- ACORN/CSI markets its programs to campaigns, which pay ACORN/CSI for the "services"
- ACORN is paid not only to register voters, but to also convert those voter registrations into votes at the polls for specific candidates.
- ACORN is supposed to get the voters to the polls by bus or to make sure the voters get an absentee ballot and to make sure the votes are cast.
- CSI used the political canvassers and others employed by ACORN for its voter turnout programs.

ACORN's Unofficial "Muscle for the Money" Program:

- This is an "unofficial" corporate directed program for donations
- Payments from SEIU were made to ACORN's DC office to harass The Carlyle Group and, specifically, Mr. David Rubenstein, a founder of the company
- Even though DC ACORN had no interest in The Carlyle Group, they were paid by SEIU to go break up a banquet and protest at his house.
- It was called "Muscle for Money" because they would go intimidate people and protest.
- Targets of the paid protests included Sherwin-Williams, H&R Block, Jackson Hewitt and Money Mart, among others

- The purpose was to get money from the targeted entities for ACORN, to force the companies to "negotiate"

In addition to my prior testimony, I can provide information regarding the following:

- 1) Project Vote may have violated its 501(c)(3) status since its inception by using government and private grants that ultimately go directly or indirectly to ACORN
  - The internal accounting system Navision could be used to prove that Project Vote acted as part of ACORN political operations while purporting to be a 501(c)(3) organization to better promote ACORN's political agenda.
  - Staffing lists would illustrate the overlap in staff and name several employees from the Project Vote payroll who were part of ACORN Political Operations.
- 2) ACORN, Project Vote and Citizen Services Inc (CSI) are the same organization with different tax designations that are used to facilitate the transfer of money among the organizations
  - Documents may show what the functions of CSI are and would then tie those activities back to Project Vote.
  - Documents may also show that CSI is intricately involved in the donor management system, DonorPerfect, which is used by ACORN and its affiliates.
- 3) ACORN has promoted a culture of dishonesty motivated by a desire to reach target Voter Registration goals and senior staff portrayed an attitude that allowed for some "bad" cards in order to reach these goals
  - ACORN hires canvassers to conduct voter registrations. Some canvassers are employed as paid political canvassers on salary.
  - ACORN does have a "quota system" for their voter registration canvassers that required each canvasser to turn in at least 20 cards per day.
  - Evidence supports the allegation that canvassers who did not turn in the minimum of 20 cards per day were fired.
  - Evidence also supports that in order to meet the daily quota, ACORN pressured contractual employees, the part-time, temporary employees to perform.
  - Contractual employees must sign a document agreeing to prosecution if fraudulent cards are found but in some instances supervisors appeared to be encouraging filling out incomplete cards.
  - I have knowledge of employees being paid in cash, in some instances.
  - ACORN had several hiring frenzies during the voter registration drives and the "ramp-up" period and ACORN was aware of the problems associated with this period
- 4) Karyn Gillette, Project Vote Development Director, Jeff Robinson, senior Project Vote "money man" and Nathan Henderson James, Project Vote Research and Political Director are all employed by CSI (Citizens Services Inc.) and may have worked directly with anyone seeking the services of CSI. Money paid to CSI would have obvious ACORN ties.
  - Facts exist that may tie Project Vote staff back to the payroll of CSI.
  - Jeffrey Robinson is listed as CSI Executive Vice President and the national deputy political

director for campaigns and elections for ACORN. Robinson is also head of the 527 group Communities Voting Together.

- 5) Zach Polett, former Executive Director of Project Vote and former director of ACORN Political Operations, mentioned that Obama had worked for "us" and that he even supervised him during an ACORN Political staff retreat in November 2007.
  - The statement was made during a November 2007 ACORN Political Operations meeting in Arkansas.
- 6) In late 2007, I received a call from the campaign asking if this was the same Project Vote that Obama worked for in the 90's. With the staff retreat fresh in mind I answered yes and sent an email to Zach Polett, Karyn Gillette, Nathan Henderson James, and Kevin Whelan stating that the campaign wanted someone to call them back regarding some media questions that were being asked at the time.
  - Documents may exist that will show coordination between the Obama campaign and ACORN outside of just the sharing of the donor lists.
  - A meeting took place between the senior management of ACORN and the Obama campaign in late 2007 and was confirmed by Stephanie Strom of the New York Times using a board member as a source as well. This meeting took place sometime in November of 2007 and may have even been a conference call between the campaign and PV.
- 7) In late 2007, Karyn Gillette approached me to tell me that she had direct contact with the Obama campaign and had obtained their donor lists.
  - Gillette spoke of a direct link to the campaign, and I was given an excel spreadsheet to work with in cultivating new donors.
  - When I had trouble because of the duplicates, Karyn stated that she would contact her person at the campaign and see if they had another one.
- 8) Karyn Gillette also provided list obtained from the Kerry and Clinton campaigns, as well as the 2004 DNC donor lists.
  - These lists were shared with the Political directors of roughly 12 ACORN battleground states in order to raise money for a \$28,000,000 (number as of 11/2007) voter registration drive.
- 9) ACORN and Project Vote used CCI to transfer money between the organizations.
  - CCI is an acronym for Citizens Consulting Incorporate. CCI is the accounting arm for ACORN and all of the money is placed in CCI first.
  - CCI controls how the organization operates and its cash flows and makes sure its bills are paid.
  - CCI makes disbursements either directly into ACORN affiliate accounts or arranges transfers between the different organizations.
  - All donations to ACORN or any of the over 300 affiliate organizations are deposited into bank accounts held by CCI.
  - CCI has dozens of accounts in the accounting system, Navision, and each affiliate is given an accounting code. Project Vote is known as VOTE in Navision.

10) Questions have been raised by ACORN's own lawyers about the shredding or destruction of documents:

- Documents from former board members show that ACORN lawyer Steve Bachmann was concerned about documents being destroyed and sent out a memo in the summer of 2008 reminding ACORN employees about the destruction of documents.
- Former board member Marcel Reid recounted walking into the DC ACORN office and witnessing the destruction of documents using a shredder. This information was shared with the New York Times in 2008 and Heidelbaugh.

11) Misappropriation of Government Grants

- Documents and emails from ACORN/Project Vote employees will demonstrate a willingness to facilitate falsification of grant reports to the Election Assistance Committee.
- Current ACORN/Project Vote management staff encouraged their administrative support staff to create and file false documents to the Federal Government.

Based on my testimony and evidence, I respectfully submit that (1) ACORN, Project Vote and the rest of the Council of Organizations should be investigated by the United States Justice Department for Voter Registration Fraud and possible RICO violations; (2) the IRS should audit the affiliated entities to determine if tax laws were violated and 501(c)(3) tax exempt status was abused; and (3) the FEC should also investigate possible violations of federal law related to my testimony and evidence of illegal coordination between ACORN/Project Vote and the Obama presidential campaign.

ACORN has shown itself to be a thoroughly corrupt organization that cannot be reformed and whose activities are detrimental to minorities, the poor and America as a whole.